

Mr. LOEBSACK. Madam Speaker, at this time I yield such time as he may consume to my colleague, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT).

□ 1440

Mr. SPRATT. Madam Speaker, I join other members of the South Carolina delegation in cheering the University of South Carolina baseball team and Coach Ray Tanner for winning the 2010 College World Series.

I extend special congratulations to Coach Tanner for being named College Coach of the Year by Baseball America. Coach Tanner is completing his 14th season at the University of South Carolina.

I also take particular pride in the accomplishments of the players from my district, the Fifth Congressional District, including Matt Price, the pitcher who earned the win with his relief effort against UCLA in the Gamecocks' championship-clinching victory.

The College World Series is a tribute to the impact of baseball on our State. Five public universities from South Carolina made the field of 64, and during the semifinal, a great in-State rivalry was played out on the national stage as the Carolina Gamecocks defeated the Clemson Tigers to advance to the finals.

This win was the university's first championship in any men's sport, and its impact upon the city of Columbia and the State was immediate and profound. It is hard to believe that the Gamecocks prevailed even when they were one strike away from elimination in the quarter-final game.

In addition to their athletic abilities, these young athletes serve as examples of the power of hard work, perseverance, and commitment. They have our gratitude and admiration, and I commend them for their sterling achievement.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Madam Speaker, I once again show my support for House Resolution 1491, in particular, my support and congratulations to our two South Carolina colleagues who are here today as well. I know it is a very happy day for them.

I want to congratulate the University of South Carolina Gamecocks on their 2010 NCAA Division I College World Series victory, and I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LOEBSACK) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1491.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

STRENGTHENING EMPLOYMENT CLUSTERS TO ORGANIZE REGIONAL SUCCESS ACT OF 2010

Mr. LOEBSACK. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1855) to promote industry growth and competitiveness and to improve worker training, retention, and advancement, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1855

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Strengthening Employment Clusters to Organize Regional Success Act of 2010" or the "SECTORS Act of 2010".

SEC. 2. INDUSTRY OR SECTOR PARTNERSHIP GRANT.

(a) AMENDMENT.—Subtitle D of title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 2911 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 171 the following:

"SEC. 171A. INDUSTRY OR SECTOR PARTNERSHIP GRANT PROGRAM.

"(a) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this section to promote industry or sector partnerships that lead collaborative planning, resource alignment, and training efforts across multiple firms for a range of workers employed or potentially employed by a targeted industry cluster, in order to encourage industry growth and competitiveness and to improve worker training, retention, and advancement in targeted industry clusters, including by developing—

"(1) immediate strategies for regions and communities to fulfill pressing skilled workforce needs;

"(2) long-term plans to grow targeted industry clusters with better training and a more productive workforce;

"(3) core competencies and competitive advantages for regions and communities undergoing structural economic redevelopment; and

"(4) cross-firm skill standards, career ladders, job redefinitions, employer practices, and shared training and support capacities that facilitate the advancement of workers at all skill levels.

"(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

"(1) CAREER LADDER.—The term 'career ladder' means an identified series of positions, work experiences, and educational benchmarks or credentials that offer occupational and financial advancement within a specified career field or related fields over time.

"(2) ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY.—The term 'economic self-sufficiency' means, with respect to a worker, earning a wage sufficient to support a family adequately over time, based on factors such as—

"(A) family size;

"(B) the number and ages of children in the family;

"(C) the cost of living in the worker's community; and

"(D) other factors that may vary by region.

"(3) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term 'eligible entity' means—

"(A) an industry or sector partnership; or

"(B) an eligible State agency.

"(4) ELIGIBLE STATE AGENCY.—The term 'eligible State agency' means a State agency designated by the Governor of the State in which the State agency is located for the purposes of the grant program under this section.

"(5) HIGH-PRIORITY OCCUPATION.—The term 'high-priority occupation' means an occupation that—

"(A) has a significant presence in an industry cluster;

"(B) is in demand by employers;

"(C) pays family-sustaining wages that enable workers to achieve economic self-sufficiency, or can reasonably be expected to lead to such wages;

"(D) has or is in the process of developing a documented career ladder; and

"(E) has a significant impact on a region's economic development strategy.

"(6) INDUSTRY CLUSTER.—The term 'industry cluster' means a concentration of interconnected businesses, suppliers, research and development, service providers, and associated institutions in a particular field that are linked by common workforce needs.

"(7) INDUSTRY OR SECTOR PARTNERSHIP.—The term 'industry or sector partnership' means a workforce collaborative that is described as follows:

"(A) REQUIRED MEMBERS.—

"(i) IN GENERAL.—A workforce collaborative that organizes key stakeholders in a targeted industry cluster into a working group that focuses on the workforce needs of the targeted industry cluster and that includes, at the appropriate stage of development of the partnership—

"(I) representatives of multiple firms or employers in the targeted industry cluster, including small- and medium-sized employers when practicable;

"(II) 1 or more representatives of State labor organizations, central labor coalitions, or other labor organizations, except instances where no labor representation exists;

"(III) 1 or more representatives of local boards;

"(IV) 1 or more representatives of postsecondary educational institutions or other training providers; and

"(V) 1 or more representatives of State workforce agencies or other entities providing employment services.

"(ii) DIVERSE AND DISTINCT REPRESENTATION.—No individual may serve as a member in an industry or sector partnership for more than 1 of the required categories described in subclauses (I) through (V) of clause (i).

"(B) AUTHORIZED MEMBERS.—An industry or sector partnership may include representatives of—

"(i) State or local government;

"(ii) State or local economic development agencies;

"(iii) other State or local agencies;

"(iv) chambers of commerce;

"(v) nonprofit organizations;

"(vi) philanthropic organizations;

"(vii) economic development organizations;

"(viii) industry associations; and

"(ix) other organizations, as determined necessary by the members comprising the industry or sector partnership.

"(8) TARGETED INDUSTRY CLUSTER.—The term 'targeted industry cluster' means an industry cluster that has—

"(A) economic impact in a local or regional area, such as advanced manufacturing, clean energy technology, and health care;

"(B) immediate workforce development needs, such as advanced manufacturing, clean energy, technology, and health care; and

“(C) documented career opportunities.

“(C) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—From amounts appropriated to carry out this section, the Secretary shall award, on a competitive basis, grants described in paragraph (3) to eligible entities to enable the eligible entities to plan and implement, respectively, the eligible entities’ strategic objectives in accordance with subsection (d)(2)(D).

“(2) MAXIMUM AMOUNT.—

“(A) IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS.—An implementation grant awarded under paragraph (3)(A) may not exceed a total of \$2,500,000 for a 3-year period.

“(B) RENEWAL GRANTS.—A renewal grant awarded under paragraph (3)(C) may not exceed a total of \$1,500,000 for a 3-year period.

“(3) IMPLEMENTATION AND RENEWAL GRANTS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may award an implementation grant under this section to an eligible entity that has established, or is in the process of establishing, an industry or sector partnership.

“(B) DURATION.—An implementation grant shall be for a duration of not more than 3 years, and may be renewed in accordance with subparagraph (C).

“(C) RENEWAL.—The Secretary may renew an implementation grant for not more than 3 years. A renewal of such grant shall be subject to the requirements of this section, except that the Secretary shall—

“(i) prioritize renewals to eligible entities that can demonstrate the long-term sustainability of an industry or sector partnership funded under this section; and

“(ii) require assurances that the eligible entity will leverage, in accordance with subparagraph (D)(ii), each year of the grant period, additional funding sources for the non-Federal share of the grant which shall—

“(I) be in an amount greater than—

“(aa) the non-Federal share requirement described in subparagraph (D)(i)(III); and

“(bb) for the second and third year of the grant period, the non-Federal share amount the eligible entity provided for the preceding year of the grant; and

“(II) include at least a 50 percent cash match from the State, the industry cluster, or some combination thereof, of the eligible entity.

“(D) FEDERAL AND NON-FEDERAL SHARE.—

“(i) FEDERAL SHARE.—Except as provided in subparagraph (C)(ii) and clause (iii) of this subparagraph, the Federal share of a grant under this section shall be—

“(I) 90 percent of the costs of the activities described in subsection (f), in the first year of the grant;

“(II) 80 percent of such costs in the second year of the grant; and

“(III) 70 percent of such costs in the third year of the grant.

“(ii) NON-FEDERAL.—The non-Federal share of a grant under this section may be in cash or in-kind, and may come from State, local, philanthropic, private, or other sources.

“(iii) EXCEPTION.—The Secretary may require the Federal share of a grant under this section to be 100 percent if an eligible entity receiving such grant is located in a State or local area that is receiving a national emergency grant under section 173.

“(4) FISCAL AGENT.—Each eligible entity receiving a grant under this section that is an industry or sector partnership shall designate an entity in the partnership as the fiscal agent for purposes of this grant.

“(5) USE OF GRANT FUNDS DURING GRANT PERIODS.—An eligible entity receiving grant funds under a grant under this section shall expend grant funds or obligate grant funds to be expended by the last day of the grant period.

“(d) APPLICATION PROCESS.—

“(1) IDENTIFICATION OF A TARGETED INDUSTRY CLUSTER.—In order to qualify for a grant under this section, an eligible entity shall identify a targeted industry cluster that could benefit from such grant by—

“(A) working with businesses, industry associations and organizations, labor organizations, State boards, local boards, economic development agencies, and other organizations that the eligible entity determines necessary, to identify an appropriate targeted industry cluster based on criteria that include, at a minimum—

“(i) data showing the competitiveness of the industry cluster;

“(ii) the importance of the industry cluster to the economic development of the area served by the eligible entity, including estimation of jobs created or preserved;

“(iii) the identification of supply and distribution chains within the industry cluster; and

“(iv) research studies on industry clusters; and

“(B) working with appropriate employment agencies, workforce investment boards, economic development agencies, community organizations, and other organizations that the eligible entity determines necessary to ensure that the targeted industry cluster identified under subparagraph (A) should be targeted for investment, based primarily on the following criteria:

“(i) Demonstrated demand for job growth potential.

“(ii) Employment base.

“(iii) Wages and benefits.

“(iv) Demonstrated importance of the targeted industry cluster to the area’s economy.

“(v) Workforce development needs.

“(2) APPLICATION.—An eligible entity desiring to receive a grant under this section shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require. An application submitted under this paragraph shall contain, at a minimum, the following:

“(A) A description of the eligible entity, evidence of the eligible entity’s capacity to carry out activities in support of the strategic objectives identified in the application under subparagraph (D), and a description of the expected participation and responsibilities of each of the mandatory partners described in subsection (b)(7)(A).

“(B) A description of the targeted industry cluster for which the eligible entity intends to carry out activities through a grant under this section, and a description of how such targeted industry cluster was identified in accordance with paragraph (1).

“(C) A description of the workers that will be targeted or recruited by the partnership, including an analysis of the existing labor market, a description of potential barriers to employment for targeted workers, and a description of strategies that will be employed to help workers overcome such barriers.

“(D) A description of the strategic objectives that the eligible entity intends to carry out for the targeted industry cluster, which objectives shall include—

“(i) recruiting key stakeholders in the targeted industry cluster, such as multiple businesses and employers, labor organizations, local boards, and education and training providers, and regularly convening the stakeholders in a collaborative structure that supports the sharing of information, ideas, and challenges common to the targeted industry cluster;

“(ii) identifying the training needs of multiple businesses, especially skill gaps critical to competitiveness and innovation to the targeted industry cluster;

“(iii) facilitating economies of scale by aggregating training and education needs of multiple employers;

“(iv) helping postsecondary educational institutions, training institutions, apprenticeship programs, and all other training programs authorized under this Act, align curricula entrance requirements and programs to industry demand, particularly for higher skill, high-priority occupations validated by the industry;

“(v) ensuring that the State agency, including services provided by State merit staff authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act program, shall inform recipients of unemployment insurance of the job and training opportunities that may result from the implementation of this grant;

“(vi) informing and collaborating with organizations such as youth councils, business-education partnerships, apprenticeship programs, secondary schools, and postsecondary educational institutions, and with parents and career counselors, for the purpose of addressing the challenges of connecting disadvantaged adults as defined in section 132(b)(1)(B)(v) and disadvantaged youth as defined in section 127(b) to careers;

“(vii) helping companies identify, and work together to address, common organizational and human resource challenges, such as—

“(I) recruiting new workers;

“(II) implementing effective workplace practices;

“(III) retraining dislocated and incumbent workers;

“(IV) implementing a high-performance work organization;

“(V) recruiting and retaining women in nontraditional occupations;

“(VI) adopting new technologies; and

“(VII) fostering experiential and contextualized on-the-job learning;

“(viii) developing and strengthening career ladders within and across companies, in order to enable dislocated, incumbent and entry-level workers to improve skills and advance to higher-wage jobs;

“(ix) improving job quality through improving wages, benefits, and working conditions;

“(x) helping partner companies in industry or sector partnerships to attract potential employees from a diverse job seeker base, including individuals with barriers to employment (such as job seekers who are low income, youth, older workers, and individuals who have completed a term of imprisonment), by identifying such barriers through analysis of the existing labor market and implementing strategies to help such workers overcome such barriers; and

“(xi) strengthening connections among businesses in the targeted industry cluster, leading to cooperation beyond workforce issues that will improve competitiveness and job quality, such as joint purchasing, market research, or centers for technology and innovation.

“(E) A description of the manner in which the eligible entity intends to make sustainable progress toward the strategic objectives described in subparagraph (D).

“(F) Performance measures for measuring progress toward the strategic objectives. Such performance measures—

“(i) may consider the benefits provided by the grant activities funded under this section for workers employed in the targeted industry cluster, disaggregated by gender and race, such as—

“(I) the number of workers receiving portable industry-recognized credentials;

“(II) the number of workers with increased wages, the percentage of workers with increased wages, and the average wage increase; and

“(III) for dislocated or nonincumbent workers, the number of workers placed in sector-related jobs; and

“(ii) may consider the benefits provided by the grant activities funded under this section for firms and industries in the targeted industry cluster, such as—

“(I) the creation or updating of an industry plan to meet current and future workforce demand;

“(II) the creation or updating of published industry-wide skill standards or career pathways;

“(III) the creation or updating of portable, industry-recognized credentials, including national credentials or where there is not such a credential, the creation or updating of a training curriculum that can lead to the development of such a credential;

“(IV) the number of firms, and the percentage of the local industry, participating in the industry or sector partnership; and

“(V) the number of firms, and the percentage of the local industry, receiving workers or services through the grant funded under this section.

“(G) A timeline for achieving progress toward the strategic objectives.

“(H) In the case of an eligible entity desiring an implementation grant under this section, an assurance that the eligible entity will leverage other funding sources, in addition to the amount required for the non-Federal share under subsection (c)(3)(D), to provide training or supportive services to workers under the grant program. Such additional funding sources may include—

“(i) funding under this title used for such training and supportive services;

“(ii) funding under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of 1998 (20 U.S.C. 9201 et seq.);

“(iii) economic development funding;

“(iv) employer contributions to training initiatives; or

“(v) providing employees with employee release time for such training or supportive services.

“(e) AWARD BASIS.—

“(1) GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION.—The Secretary shall award grants under this section in a manner to ensure geographic diversity.

“(2) PRIORITIES.—In awarding grants under this section, the Secretary shall give priority to eligible entities that—

“(A) work with employers within a targeted industry cluster to retain and expand employment in high wage, high growth areas;

“(B) focus on helping workers move toward economic self-sufficiency and ensuring the workers have access to adequate supportive services;

“(C) address the needs of firms with limited human resources or in-house training capacity, including small- and medium-sized firms; and

“(D) coordinate with entities carrying out State and local workforce investment, economic development, and education activities.

“(f) ACTIVITIES.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—An eligible entity receiving a grant under this section shall carry out the activities necessary to meet the strategic objectives, including planning activities if applicable, described in the entity’s application in a manner that—

“(A) integrates services and funding sources in a way that enhances the effectiveness of the activities; and

“(B) uses grant funds awarded under this section efficiently.

“(2) PLANNING ACTIVITIES.—Planning activities may only be carried out by an eligible entity receiving an implementation grant under this section during the first year of the grant period with not more than

\$250,000 or 10 percent, whichever is greater of the grant funds.

“(3) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—An eligible entity may retain a portion of a grant awarded under this section for a fiscal year to carry out the administration of this section in an amount not to exceed 5 percent of the grant amount.

“(g) EVALUATION AND PROGRESS REPORTS.—

“(1) ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT AND EVALUATION.—Not later than 1 year after receiving a grant under this section, and annually thereafter, an eligible entity shall—

“(A) report to the Secretary, and to the Governor of the State that the eligible entity serves, on the activities funded pursuant to a grant under this section; and

“(B) evaluate the progress the eligible entity has made toward the strategic objectives identified in the application under subsection (d)(2)(D), and measure the progress using the performance measures identified in the application under subsection (d)(2)(F).

“(2) REPORT TO THE SECRETARY.—An eligible entity receiving a grant under this section shall submit to the Secretary a report containing the results of the evaluation described in subparagraph (B) at such time and in such manner as the Secretary may require.

“(h) ADMINISTRATION BY THE SECRETARY.—

“(1) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—The Secretary may retain not more than 2 percent of the funds appropriated to carry out this section for each fiscal year to administer this section.

“(2) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND OVERSIGHT.—The Secretary shall provide technical assistance and oversight to assist the eligible entities in applying for and administering grants awarded under this section. The Secretary shall also provide technical assistance to eligible entities in the form of conferences and through the collection and dissemination of information on best practices. The Secretary may award a grant or contract to 1 or more national or State organizations to provide technical assistance to foster the planning, formation, and implementation of industry cluster partnerships.

“(3) GEOGRAPHIC EQUALITY.—The Secretary shall ensure that, to the extent practicable, grants are awarded on a geographically equal basis.

“(4) PERFORMANCE MEASURES.—The Secretary shall issue a range of performance measures, with quantifiable benchmarks, and methodologies that eligible entities may use to evaluate the effectiveness of each type of activity in making progress toward the strategic objectives described in subsection (d)(2)(D). Such measures shall consider the benefits of the industry or sector partnership and its activities for workers, firms, industries, and communities.

“(5) DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION.—The Secretary shall—

“(A) coordinate the annual review of each eligible entity receiving a grant under this section and produce an overview report that, at a minimum, includes—

“(i) the critical learning of each industry or sector partnership, such as—

“(I) the training that was most effective;

“(II) the human resource challenges that were most common;

“(III) how technology is changing the targeted industry cluster; and

“(IV) the changes that may impact the targeted industry cluster over the next 5 years; and

“(ii) a description of what eligible entities serving similar targeted industry clusters consider exemplary practices, such as—

“(I) how to work effectively with postsecondary educational institutions;

“(II) the use of internships;

“(III) coordinating with apprenticeships and cooperative education programs;

“(IV) how to work effectively with schools providing vocational education;

“(V) how to work effectively with adult populations, including—

“(aa) dislocated workers;

“(bb) women in nontraditional occupations; and

“(cc) individuals with barriers to employment, such as job seekers who—

“(AA) are economically disadvantaged;

“(BB) have limited English proficiency;

“(CC) require remedial education;

“(DD) are older workers;

“(EE) are individuals who have completed a sentence for a criminal offense; and

“(FF) have other barriers to employment;

“(VI) employer practices that are most effective;

“(VII) the types of training that are most effective; and

“(VIII) other areas where industry or sector partnerships can assist each other;

“(B) make resource materials, including all reports published and all data collected under this section, available on the Internet; and

“(C) conduct conferences and seminars to—

“(i) disseminate information on best practices developed by eligible entities receiving a grant under this section; and

“(ii) provide information to the communities of eligible entities.

“(6) REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act and on an annual basis, the Secretary shall transmit a report to Congress on the industry or sector partnership grant program established by this section. The report shall include a description of—

“(A) the eligible entities receiving funding;

“(B) the activities carried out by the eligible entities;

“(C) how the eligible entities were selected to receive funding under this section; and

“(D) an assessment of the results achieved by the grant program including findings from the annual reviews described in paragraph (4)(A).

“(i) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to permit—

“(1) the reporting or sharing of personally identifiable information collected or made available under this section; and

“(2) the Secretary to share with, or report to, any person, any personally identifiable information collected or made available under this section.”

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (20 U.S.C. 9201 note) is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 171 the following:

“171A. Industry or sector partnership grant program.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LOEBSACK) and the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. GUTHRIE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Iowa.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LOEBSACK. Madam Speaker, I request 5 legislative days during which Members may revise and extend and insert extraneous material on H.R. 1855 into the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Iowa?

There was no objection.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1855, the Strengthening Employment Clusters to Organize Regional Success Act, or the SECTORS Act, legislation that I introduced in the House along with my colleague from the other side of the aisle, Congressman TODD PLATTS.

I want to thank Congressman PLATTS for his work on this legislation and for recognizing the worthiness of this effort. The SECTORS Act was introduced as bipartisan legislation, and I am pleased that we have gained additional bipartisan cosponsors as well.

I also want to thank Chairman MILLER and Ranking Member KLINE of the Education and Labor Committee, as well as the committee staff, for working with me to move this legislation to the floor of the House.

No matter what party you are from, I think we can all agree that we should be supportive of innovative and collaborative strategies that increase the success of American business and improve the employment outlook of our workforce. As our country continues to recover from the economic downturn, we should work toward long-term improvements in our workforce training and resource systems and look at how we can better utilize the infrastructure that is already in place. Given our current economic situation and the fact that we have seen a steep decrease in Federal investment in employment and training over the past 20 years, this effort is all the more needed.

Recently, The New York Times ran a story detailing a significant mismatch between the skilled workers needed for many industries and the skill sets of many of the currently unemployed. The story also referenced a survey done last year of 779 industrial companies by the National Association of Manufacturers, the Manufacturing Institute, and Deloitte which found that 32 percent of companies reported “moderate to serious” skills shortages. Sixty-three percent of life science companies and 45 percent of energy firms cited such shortages.

Through the SECTORS Act, we are taking serious action to help address these issues and ensure that we build things in America again. In fact, just yesterday, The New York Times had another story entitled “After Training, Still Scrambling for Employment” that detailed the struggles our workforce is having finding training to pursue careers in existing and growing fields. It also highlighted some successful existing efforts with sector partnership-based approaches.

Some of our industries that are poised for continued growth and expansion and would be strong contributors to economic recovery, such as advanced manufacturing, clean energy technology, and health care and information technology, are struggling. By the nature of the problem, this means our Nation’s workforce is continuing to have trouble finding work in these fields because of the mismatch of skill sets.

The SECTORS Act addresses these issues by facilitating, nationwide, one of the key elements of successful State and local workforce development efforts: sector or industry partnerships. Sector partnerships organize stakeholders connected to a crucial industry, like manufacturing, for example, and will include multiple firms and businesses, employees, unions, education and training providers, and local workforce and education systems, among others, to develop and implement plans for growing, or saving, that industry.

There is a particular focus on building new workforce pipelines where skilled worker shortages exist and improving the ways existing workers are utilized, retrained, and paid.

The SECTORS Act will put in place partnerships that lead to alignment of educational institutions, training institutions, apprenticeship programs, and all other training programs to meet industry demand, particularly for higher skill, high-priority occupations. Regularly convening industry players on an ongoing basis to plan and implement strategies to save or expand their industry will help to strengthen connections and aggregate training and education needs of multiple employers.

Sector partnerships will also help businesses recruit new workers, retrain dislocated workers, develop and strengthen career ladders across companies, and improve overall job quality. These types of strategies have been highly successful regionally, including in my State of Iowa.

The National Skills Coalition, which has been a strong advocate for these strategies for some time, has organized a broad-based, nationwide coalition of workforce and vocational organizations, manufacturing associations, colleges and universities, chambers of commerce, and training and human services organizations that support this legislation and these partnerships.

The SECTORS Act is about helping industries access the trained employees they need to expand and thrive, helping employees access the education and training they require to be competitive in the 21st century economy and find quality jobs, and helping workforce development and education providers train employees in the demand of today’s industries. In so doing, this bill will help to ensure that our Nation and the American workforce continue to stand at the forefront of the 21st century economy.

I would also like to thank Representative MILLER, chairman of the Education and Labor Committee, for his support of and work on this bill.

I urge support for this bipartisan legislation, Madam Speaker, which also has bipartisan support in the Senate.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1855, the Strengthening

Employment Clusters to Organize Regional Success, or the SECTORS, Act, and I appreciate Mr. LOEBSACK and the bipartisan way in which this is going to move forward.

H.R. 1855 creates new grants within the Workforce Investment Act to help create or increase targeted industry capacity and partnerships within specific regions. This is an idea that is already being done in some places across the country with success. For example, Philadelphia has created a regional program to train nurses for their hospitals and health care industry needs.

I believe Federal policies should also encourage regional business development and improve worker training, retention, and advancement opportunities. That is why I strongly support not only this bill but strongly support the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act.

□ 1450

Madam Speaker, the Workforce Investment Act is 8 years overdue in its reauthorization, and I am disappointed that we are not engaging in a larger discussion of Workforce Investment Act reauthorization.

The American people are facing a tremendous economic challenge and there has never been a more critical time to make sure our workforce has the opportunity to find new jobs or receive additional training. We need better systems of training and skills development to help move into new industries.

I come from a small business manufacturing background, and I have seen firsthand that unemployed workers who receive additional training for new skills can obtain a higher-paying job which can radically transform their way of life. We cannot afford to approach the workforce and job needs of our country in a piecemeal way. The American people deserve a real, comprehensive job training bill.

I, along with eight of my colleagues, introduced H.R. 4271, the Workforce Investment Improvement Act of 2009, to begin the process of reauthorization of WIA. But, unfortunately, my bill has not been taken up by the Education and Labor Committee.

I do support this bill before us today, but I do believe it’s a disservice to the American people not to have an updated, comprehensive workforce development bill, and I urge this Congress to take action on full authorization of WIA as soon as possible. I do urge my colleagues to support the bill before us, however.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Madam Speaker, in closing, I do want to thank the gentleman from Kentucky for his support and the Members from the other side of the aisle for supporting this bill. It has been a true bipartisan effort, and I really do appreciate that.

I do want to say that according to a multiyear study conducted by public-private ventures, participants in SECTORS-based training programs earned

an average of 18.3 percent, or about \$4,500, more than a control group over a 24-month period of study. In addition, participants in SECTORS programs were more likely to work in jobs with benefits, including health insurance and paid time off, and were more likely to find consistent work, about 1.3 additional months of employment, over the 2-year period than the control group average.

This legislation will put in place additional SECTORS partnerships, as I said before, between business, employees, and education and training providers that lead to collaborative planning, resource alignment, and training efforts for current and potential workers to improve our Nation's business manufacturing and industry outlook.

It is supported by a broad-based nationwide coalition of workforce and vocational organizations, manufacturing associations, colleges and universities, chambers of commerce, and training and human services organizations nationwide, and it does have the dual benefits of helping businesses and employees, and it has strong bipartisan support in the House of Representatives.

I urge support for this legislation.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1855, the Strengthening Employment Clusters to Organize Regional Success or SECTORS Act, which promotes strategic approaches to addressing skills shortages.

Sector strategies is an approach that brings employers in a certain industry together with education, labor, workforce, and other groups to identify and provide training that is tailored to meet the sector needs of that region's economy. The SECTORS Act would support existing industry partnerships or help leverage funding from employers, educators, labor, and the workforce system to adopt a sectors-based working partnership that comes together to identify economic trends and shared workforce issues and develop the tools required to meet the growing demand in that targeted industry.

As some industries maintain signs of recovery, you would expect that employers would have an easy time filling their openings. In manufacturing, the June 2010 ISM Report on Business showed that economic activity in the sector grew for the 11th consecutive month. The manufacturing industry has added 136,000 jobs since December 2009. Yet many American companies, including manufacturers believe they cannot find workers with the qualifications needed for these jobs.

A recent New York Times article highlighted a contract drug company in Ohio that needed to hire 100 workers. Despite reviewing 3,600 job applications, the company has only offered jobs to 47 people so far. In a July 2009 survey of employers, the Business Roundtable's Springboard Project found that more than 60 percent of those surveyed indicated that they were having difficulty finding qualified applicants to fill current vacancies, and almost half indicated that there was a gap between the skills of their current workforce and company requirements. In a survey of manufacturing organizations conducted by Deloitte, The Manufacturing Institute, and Oracle found that skill

shortages persist, especially for the most profitable companies. Almost one-third of responding companies reported some level of shortages today, and over one-half reported shortages for skilled production workers. With the economy improving, companies are retooling the way they operate in order to remain competitive against their global rivals and in assessing its short and long-term talent needs, businesses are calling for higher-skilled workers.

In the current economy, workers need a wide range of services and support to reenter and succeed in the labor market. Job training is one important part of that solution, particularly for workers who have experienced extended unemployment and need to rebuild their skills; dislocated workers who are moving into new industries as local and regional economies are revamped; or even incumbent workers who need to upgrade their skills as industries adopt new technologies, including green technology. It is critical that we ensure that workers have the right skills for today's labor market and that those skills help them move into jobs and careers. One of the best ways to do this is to ensure that federally funded training is developed in partnership with local and regional employers.

The SECTORS Act will help businesses in growing industries plan for their talents needs while ensuring education and workforce provide the learning for workers to match the skills required by employers. By promoting sector strategies, employers can take control of the design and work in coordination with education and job training providers from the public and private sectors to develop strategies that will quickly train workers for waiting jobs, and develop long-term solutions to grow that industry as part of a community's economic recovery. Specifically, the SECTORS Act would establish a new Sector Partnership Grant program administered by DOL to provide designated funding and distinct performance measures for industry partnerships.

SECTORS help both workers and local firms in the same industry, to help ensure that workers are getting the skills that employers need and the employers can find and hire the skilled workforce they need to compete and lead the world in the global economy. Federal investment that encourages best practices in the workforce development field, supports efforts already going on in communities around the country, and ensures that federal investments improve the skill of our nation's workforce, will efficiently and effectively support our nation's economic recovery.

In addition, sector partnerships can have a positive impact on workers, especially those that are low-income. Public/Private Ventures found in their study of sector-based training those participants in the program earned an average of about \$4,500 more than those not engaged in training sponsored by a sector partnership. More than 200 sector partnerships are active, comprising 23 industry sectors in 41 states. For example, Pennsylvania has nearly eighty partnerships serving more than six thousand firms across the Commonwealth, and more than 70,000 workers have received training as part of the program. The SECTORS Act will drive strategic alliances that advance a region's economic vitality and make sure workers have the skills in place to move forward industries that are pivotal to keeping our economy growing.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank Congressman LOEBSACK and Congressman PLATTS for introducing this legislation that is so important to our regional and national economy. I urge support of H.R. 1855, which helps to strategically position our growing industries with a highly-skilled workforce ready to innovate and complete in the 21st Century global marketplace.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1855, the "Strengthening Employment Clusters to Organize Regional Success, SECTORS Act". It is an important piece of legislation, and I would like to thank Representative DAVID LOEBSACK for bringing it to the floor. This bill, when passed, will help to encourage job advancement along with job growth.

By requiring the Secretary of Labor to award competitive grants that may reach totals of over \$2 million that will spur job growth and in-house training, the SECTORS bill will help workers who have been hard hit by this recession. This federal-industrial partnership and the coordination with state and local institutions to improve economic and educational investment will ensure a better way forward for the American worker.

In the current job climate, it is not only the unemployed who feel the wrath of recession. There are many workers, in my district included, who continue to be outpaced by changing work environments. Many industries that employ thousands of workers do not have the money or the structure necessary to promote in-house training. These industries are homes to jobs that often have no hope of advancement, jobs that steer workers away from their families and into dead-end career paths.

This bill will help workers become acclimated to the changing environment. By promoting job training and job retention through federal grants, the SECTORS Act brings hope to the thousands of workers who may not know at the moment what their future will look like. It fosters the hope that has been so barren these last months and brings opportunity to the men and women who need it most.

Again, I encourage my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. LOEBSACK. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LOEBSACK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1855, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO THE FORMER LIBERIAN REGIME OF CHARLES TAYLOR—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 111-134)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred